



Cultures and Local Practices of Sustainability

ROUTES Towards
Sustainability Network

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Introduction

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The book *Cultural and Local Practices of Sustainability* is the result of a collaborative and interdisciplinary academic effort developed in the context of the Routes towards Sustainability University Network. This book emerges from a conference held in Santiago and Villarrica by the end of 2018 related to the International Symposium on Cultures and Local Practices of Sustainability, where cultural, educational, and practical challenges were discussed for three days to move forward in terms of dynamics and notions about sustainability.

The Routes towards Sustainability University Network, born in 2012, is an association of twenty universities from different continents that hosts symposiums, conferences, lectures, study programmes, and projects from an interdisciplinary vision on sustainability.

This book is founded from a multidisciplinary approach, in which we integrate cultural elements from the environmental humanities, design, economy, urbanism, and innovation, to understand conceptions about sustainability from a complex and systemic perspective, addressing different areas of knowledge and requiring an integrative view.

We have organized the book in two sections, for didactic purposes only. The first section deals with the elements of humanities, including a critical re-reading of studies on utopias in classical texts by Thomas More and Vasco de Quiroga; the role of children's literature in the shaping of eco minds of children in Chile; and the need to change perspectives

related to the design industry in Colombia. These three dimensions show precise connections between literature, education, and design, as central elements to understand and direct necessary changes in concepts—traditional and current—on how the challenges of sustainability must permeate cultural constructs.

The second section of the book seeks to highlight practical and methodological experiences connected to the challenges of the culture of sustainability. We incorporate visions from innovation, economy, and urban and territorial regeneration, adding collaborative and participative mechanisms to build sustainable environments.

In the first section, Spinozzi proposes a discussion on the challenges of sustainability of the habitats, from the original concepts of Thomas Moore and the work by Vasco de Quiroga, based on his experience in the Americas in the early 16th century. Her chapter compares Moore's theoretical vision with the colonialism of Mexico, both looking for answers for a sustainable living under a framework of utopias.

In a second article, Casals introduces us to environmental humanities from an ecocritical perspective. Her discussion presents concrete cases from three books, an article, and an exhibition related to marine ecosystems with a pedagogical approach. However, the language, images, and—most likely—a lack of a real interdisciplinary approximation blur the objective of fostering future ecological minds that some of these texts declare.

The third article of this section introduces us to an experience of application of the Sustainable Learning and Education Model in the area of Clothing Design, to question the practices of a fashion industry in crisis. From the concept of multiple footprints, Builes and Suárez propose a critical discussion on the effects of the fashion industry and the possibilities for transforming academic training and research in this area, providing professionals with a wider outlook on the impacts of their job.

The second section of the book begins with an article by Kemp and Turkeli discussing "the evolutionary nature of innovation and social development" and incorporating an analysis of eight notions from ecology towards innovation for sustainable development. They conclude that, to move

towards a sustainable development, we require changes towards more relational ways of living, which constitutes a quasi-evolutionary process.

Following, the article by Dal Negro, Madjitey, and Mazzanti establishes the dilemma of the actual impact of financing for the development of countries in East Africa. Their results are discouraging in terms of sustainability, since they show that investing decisions are often based on profitability rather than on other aspects of development, and that their impact focuses on countries with more stable economies, increasing the breach among the countries of the continent.

Cerreta and Mazzarella present us with an approximation to circular economy based on urban regeneration through collaborative decision-making processes, in the context of a case study in Naples. This experience emphasises a methodology that allows incorporating a group of stakeholders to transition towards sustainability.

Within the urban context, Cuervo, Lalinde, and Botero present an applied research exercise of an experimental project of technological and social innovation on housing design with sustainable criteria in Colombia. They propose a methodology called The Sustainable Habitat Integrative Workshop, to empower social transformation and provide solutions to design problems.

In contrast to the previous articles, Cannavò, Celani, and Zupi centre their attention on inner landscapes, which are fragile areas separate from big metropolis and cities that, from a new narrative of the territory, can be transformed in a more sustainable way, preserving their heritage, traditions, and knowledge. This approach, from the landscape framework, responds to a change beyond the logic of development and growth.

Finally, the section concludes with the article by Celani and Ali, in which they propose a multidisciplinary model for improving cultural assets in Europe.

The set of articles in this book allow to connect different dimensions of the transitional challenge towards sustainability, focusing on cultural

and methodological changes implied and not on the techniques, which often dominate over academic discussions on these topics.

It is necessary to claim that the articles in this book were written by each of their authors during 2019, went through a double-blind peer review, and then were revised once again by their authors at the beginning of 2020, before the pandemic of COVID-19, which has strongly impacted the ways of living in the planet at a global scale. For this reason, the time of publication has been slower than normal, and readers will not find references to the pandemic, to the possibility of envisioning more sustainable lifestyles in a post COVID-19 world, or references following 2019. Nonetheless, we believe that the contribution of this book is not focused on the systematical change of daily individual activities that might possibly occur in a post COVID-19 world —and which undoubtedly help—, but on the way in which we must think this route towards sustainability; from an integrated vision connecting humanities, culture, education, and practices to generate profound transitions towards a reality that is different from the current one.